

primaries each. In both cases, it is not known which primary was missing since all the primaries were evenly spaced.

Cases of extra primaries are much less common than those of extra rectrices (Stresemann 1963, Snow 1967). A Blue Rock Pigeon collected on 10 Mar 1986 had an additional eleventh pair of primaries. The bird was in primary moult; the first 5 pairs of primaries had completed the moult, the 6th pair was moulting (moult score 4), while primaries 7–11 were old (Fig. 3).

Cases of anisorectricial birds have been reported in 45 species belonging to 16 families (Hanmer 1985) and a case of extra primary is reported in the Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis* (Melville 1985). Among columbids anisorectricial birds have been reported in *Streptopelia capicola*, *S. senegala*, *S. decipiens*, *Oena capensis* and *Treron australis* (Hanmer 1985). However, there has been no previous record of aberrant rectrices and primaries in *Streptopelia decaocto* and *Columba livia*.

As suggested as long ago as 1896 by Newton, the death of a germ cell due to injury may be responsible for missing primaries, but the presence of extra rectrices cannot be thus explained. In the Blue Rock Pigeon the extra pair of primaries could be of phylogenetic origin, reflecting an evolutionary trend of reduction in the number of primaries in the past.

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## A new locality for the Comb Duck *Sarkiniornis melanotos* from western Ecuador and notes on the distribution of the Horned Screamer *Anhima cornuta*

by Fernando Ortiz Crespo

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On 5 Nov 1987 I visited Reserva Manglares-Churute (south side of the Gulf of Guayaquil, 2°30'S, 70°45'W), accompanied by the Reserve's

superintendent, Mr F. Zambrano. As we went in an outboard-motor canoe down a narrow mangrove-lined channel at about 6.30 a.m., we saw flocks of 15–25 large ducks that took off from the taller trees. Their colours were hard to see in the early morning light, so at first I accepted my companion's identification of them as "patos machacones" (Muscovy Ducks *Cairina moschata*), a species common in the wild in the Guayaquil area. Later, when I watched some ducks carefully and in better light, I noticed that all had uniformly white or whitish heads, necks and underparts, and dark wings, and thus were unlike any wild ducks I had seen previously in Ecuador; they resembled some types of domesticated Muscovies in pattern. Their silhouette was also striking, as despite the unmistakable duck-like bill, the legs and neck were rather long and goose-like, so that they were clearly separable from Muscovy Ducks. I identified them as Comb Ducks *Sarkiniornis melanotos*, a species almost unknown in Ecuador, but which is included in a recent checklist (Butler 1975)—without a precise locality—as generally from the "West Tropical" region. Comb Ducks are also listed for Ecuador by Ortiz-Crespo & Valarezo (1975) on the basis of two specimens shot near Mt Cayambe in the high Andes in the austral summers of 1951 and 1952 and thought to be stragglers (Norton *et al.* 1972). The species had previously been unrecorded altogether from Ecuador, and was still considered to be accidental as recently as 1982 (Ridgely MS).

Despite several sightings of flocks flying near our canoe and perching repeatedly in the mangroves, I did not notice the comb that characterizes adult males of this species. Since Hilty & Brown (1986) state that the sexes do not associate and form "separate groups as in the Old World", I conclude that the flocks consisted only of females (and perhaps immatures). These latter authors confirm that the Comb Duck can be mistaken for a domesticated Muscovy, as happened in this case, but state that all adults of the latter have a white wing patch. This wing pattern was seen in otherwise wholly dark-plumaged ducks flying singly or in pairs that day, but was not present in any of the ducks in the flocks. The greatest number seen at one time was c. 50 individuals that flew in an asymmetrical V-formation c. 100 m above our canoe, at c. 7.30 a.m.

Professor Gustavo Orces of Quito, who knew personally the hunter that collected the Cayambe birds, told me at the time that he considered it very odd that 2 birds of a rare species should be obtained at the same small lake in successive years; further, he remembered that both birds were immatures in extensive wing moult, but could not account for these coincidences except by assuming that they were migrants using the same flyway. In regard to the Comb Duck's status elsewhere, it is listed only from western Peru by Parker *et al.* (1982), where it is considered rare (the W. Ecuadorean and Peruvian birds may form a continuous population). It is recorded also in eastern Peru by Meyer de Schauensee (1966). It is "spotty and very sporadic" in Colombia, but seasonally common in Guarico, Venezuela (Hilty & Brown 1976). It has a very broad range, from Darien in Panama (where it is "fairly common"—Ridgely 1976) to central Argentina, but everywhere the biology of the New World population remains little known and its migrations or local movements are almost entirely undocumented.

The *Rhizophora-Avicennia* mangrove habitat stretches for more than 10,000 ha to the west within the reserve and is essentially continuous with the extensive estuarine mangroves of the Guayaquil Gulf; but there is a smaller inland freshwater marsh on the east side of the Reserva Manglares-Churute which is inhabited by scores of Horned Screammers *Anhima cornuta* (locally named "canclon"). During a short walk later the same day I observed 6 different individuals. Their presence there had become known when the Churute peasants talked to biologists working on the establishment of the reserve about 10 years ago. In fact, the lake in the marsh was named by the peasants "Laguna del Canclon", confirming the regular occurrence of the Horned Screamer there. Besides this locality, the species is known from the Guayaquil area by an old "Balzar" specimen (Chapman 1926) and by sight records from the Abras de Mantequilla marshes in the Babahoyo river (Lino Delgado). The species is far better represented in collections from eastern Ecuador and other localities east of the Andes (Orces 1944), Meyer de Schauensee 1966), but is uncommon everywhere in Ecuador. The population in the Guayaquil-Babahoyo area is the only one known from the Pacific drainage of the New World.

The Reserva Manglares-Churute is one of the few remaining unaltered estuarine and freshwater habitats in coastal Ecuador, but is readily accessible from Guayaquil on a paved road. From the marsh one can hear Horned Screammers calling on one side and the voices of Howler Monkeys coming from the still forested hills that rise to the west. Thus field studies of the Comb Duck and Horned Screamer, species uncommon or relatively inaccessible anywhere else, should be now entirely possible at the reserve, and could aid in building up conservation efforts for the area and these keystone species.

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## The status of *Onychognathus nabouroup benguellensis* (Neumann)

by A. J. F. K. Craig

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The Palewinged Starling *Onychognathus nabouroup* is found locally throughout the dry western areas of southern Africa (Fig. 1). In contrast to other members of the genus, the sexes are alike with glossy black plumage and a bright orange-yellow iris. The outer vanes of the 5 outer primary remiges are chestnut-brown, but the inner vanes are creamy white in all cases.

*O. nabouroup* was described by Daudin (1800) on the basis of material collected by LeVaillant, who called it "le nabouroup" after the Hottentot name for the bird (LeVaillant 1799). The type locality is Kamiesberg (30°19'S, 18°04'E) in the western Cape Province, South Africa. Reichenow (1903) described a larger race with a darker wing patch, *O. n. intenetincta*, on the basis of material from Port Elizabeth. This is unlikely to have been the collecting locality, since *O. nabouroup* has not been recorded within 100 km of Port Elizabeth subsequently. Sclater (1911) noted that he had been unable to find the specimen on which this race was based, although Reichenow (1903) had stated that it was in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) (BMNH). Sclater (1930) regarded *O. n. intenetincta* as a synonym of the nominate race, and all subsequent authors have followed suit. Neumann (1903) described *O. n. benguellensis* as similar to the nominate race, but with a pure white wing patch, rather than the buff or cream remiges of birds from other regions. Winterbottom (1961) examined a small sample of specimens and questioned the validity of this race, but it has been retained in the standard checklists (Clancey 1980).

In the course of a comparative study of the Redwinged Starling *O. morio* and the Palewinged Starling, I have examined nearly all of the available museum material of *O. nabouroup*. In addition to checking all specimens for moult, I took standard measurements of wing, tail, tarsus and culmen length, as well as measuring culmen depth and width at the anterior border of the nostril.

The type specimen of *O. nabouroup benguellensis* is in the BMNH at Tring. It is an unsexed, undated flat skin from Benguela in Angola (12°34'S, 13°24'E), with the following measurements (mm): wing 135, tail 104, tarsus 30.3, culmen 26.6. Clancey (1980: 253) notes that racial